

Speech

PM's remarks on the Strategic Defence Review: 2 June 2025

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From: **Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street**

(/government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street) and **The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP** **(/government/people/keir-starmer)**

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Good morning to all of you, thank you for being here this morning –

Thank you for sharing the work that you are doing here, some of which we can see right behind us.

Because this is a legendary Govan shipyard.

And it's really good to be able to be here in this massive space, and to be back on the Clyde.

As you may have seen a couple of months ago –

Just after dawn, on a drizzly morning –

If you can believe it –

I took a boat out onto the firth,

To meet one of our vanguard-class submarines...

As it came back in off patrol.

And it was a record-breaking patrol.

And we boarded the sub. It had just surfaced. It had been at sea...

Maintaining our continuous-at-sea deterrent...

For months on end –

A really long shift –

And met what was quite a remarkable crew.

And I will remember that day for the rest of my life.

Because it was very clear to me that there is no greater duty than the one that they carry –

No task more vital.

Our security...

NATO's security...

Depends on them.

And I had the privilege of being shown around and talked to many teams on the sub...

Saw them rushing to their battle stations to conduct a firing drill...

And wherever I went on the sub, whichever team I was talking to...

From the engineers, the cooks, the navigators –

Over and over again –

There was a sort of unofficial motto that they told me – their motto:

“Nothing works unless we all work together.”

And in this moment of danger and threat for our country –

That is the spirit we need.

The Strategic Defence Review that I am launching today...

Will bring that unity of purpose to the whole of the United Kingdom...

To mobilise the nation in a common cause...

Recognising, in these dangerous times,

That when it comes to the defence of the realm...

And the defence of everything we hold dear...

Nothing works unless we all work together.

From every man and woman serving in uniform,

To the workers building the next generation of subs in Barrow...

From the brilliant workers and apprentices right here in Govan...

Building the new Type 26 frigates – like the two you can see being built behind me today...

To our tech experts, our scientists, our engineers –

Who are pioneering battlefield innovations and cyber defences –

Every part of society...

Every citizen of this country...

Has a role to play.

Because we have to recognise that things have changed.

In the world of today –

The front line, if you like, is here.

The threat we now face is more serious, more immediate and more unpredictable...

Than at any time since the Cold War.

We face war in Europe, new nuclear risks, daily cyber attacks...

Growing Russian aggression in our waters...

Menacing our skies...

Their reckless actions driving up the cost of living here at home...

Creating economic pain...

And hitting working people the hardest.

A new era in the threats we face,

Demands a new era for defence and security...

Not just to survive in this new world –

But to lead.

We will never gamble with our national security.

Instead, we will act –

In the national interest.

And that's why I placed national security...

At the heart of our Plan for Change...

That's why I launched this Strategic Defence Review...

Within days of becoming Prime Minister.

And now it has delivered.

And I want to thank the reviewers –

Especially Lord Robertson who is with us today.

Thank you so much for your work and the work of the other reviewers.

What you have delivered is a blueprint to make Britain safer and stronger:

A battle-ready, armour-clad nation...

With the strongest alliances...

And the most advanced capabilities –

Equipped for the decades to come.

And we have already acted –

Announcing the largest sustained increase in defence spending since the end of the Cold War.

Raising it to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 –

Setting the ambition to hit 3% in the next Parliament...

Subject to economic and fiscal conditions.

And today – following through on this review –

I want to set out three fundamental changes that we're going to deliver.

First, we are moving to warfighting readiness –

As the central purpose of our armed forces.

When we are being directly threatened by states with advanced military forces...

The most effective way to deter them is to be ready –

And, frankly, to show them that we're ready –

To deliver peace through strength.

Now Britain has the finest service men and women in the world.

We're showing them the respect that they deserve

By delivering the biggest Armed Forces pay rise in 20 years,

And by pledging, today, that we will end the hollowing out of our Armed Forces.

We'll build a fighting force that is more integrated, more ready, more lethal than ever –

Backed by a stronger Strategic Reserve – fully trained and ready to mobilise at any time.

Second, everything we do will add to the strength of NATO,

As we step up to take greater responsibility for our collective defence.

The NATO alliance means something profound:

That we will never fight alone.

It is a fundamental source of our strategic strength.

That's why our defence policy will always be "NATO first."

Something that is written through this review.

The transformation we are driving in our defence must add up to...

Britain's biggest contribution to NATO since its creation.

So that when we are building new capabilities at home –

We are making our allies safer too –

Strengthening Europe –

And strengthening our bridge to the US,

As Britain's first partner in defence.

Third, we will innovate and accelerate innovation to a wartime pace...

So we can meet the threats of today and tomorrow...

As the fastest innovator in NATO.

Now this doesn't mean replacing people or hardware –

Quite the opposite –

It means learning the lessons of Ukraine, which I have discussed many times with President Zelenskyy...

To ensure every capability we have works seamlessly together –

Drones, destroyers, AI, aircraft...

Each different branch of our armed services...

Fully integrated...

To create an Army which is ten times more lethal by 2035.

And in delivering all of this –

We are more ambitious than ever for the change it can bring.

To deliver...

Not just security for our country –

But renewal too.

After the Cold War, many nations cut defence spending,

Freeing up public funds...

Creating what was called a “peace dividend”

Which people felt in their public services and the quality of their lives.

Faced with new circumstances today –

We must deliver for working people again –

To seize, now,

A “defence dividend” for the British people...

Using this moment to drive jobs and investment...

Throughout the country –

Like here in Govan...

Providing local opportunities, skilled work – community pride.

Ensuring that everyone across the United Kingdom has a role to play in this effort, yes –

But, also, that everyone has a stake in its success.

And – I want to spell this out very simply...

To achieve this...

We’re going to build.

We’re going to use this investment –

And this once-in-a-generation reform...

To drive renewal up and down the nation...

Creating new jobs...

Creating skills and opportunity...

Driving huge growth in industrial capacity.

Let me give just one or two examples.

I can announce today...

That we are going to build at least six new munitions factories in the United Kingdom –

Generating over 1,000 jobs.

We will build thousands of new long-range weapons in the United Kingdom...

To boost European deterrence...

Supporting around 800 more jobs.

We will defend our homeland...

By investing in our air and missile defence –

To better protect these islands.

We will create a hybrid Royal Navy...

Blending drones with warships, submarines, and aircraft to patrol the North Atlantic and beyond –

Supporting thousands of brilliant shipbuilding jobs –

Including right here in Govan.

Under our Aukus alliance with the US and Australia...

We will now deliver up to 12 attack submarines –

Protecting Britain's waters...

Scaling up the industrial base in Barrow –

And all along the supply chain...

To deliver a new sub every 18 months –

Again, creating thousands of jobs.

We will also invest in world-leading drone capabilities and battlefield technology...

In better kit for our warriors abroad...

And better housing for them and their families at home.

And – finally...

I can confirm today that we are investing £15 billion...

In our sovereign warhead programme...

To secure our deterrent for decades to come –

Creating 9,000 jobs...

And thousands more in the supply chain across the country,

Part of the historic renewal of our nuclear deterrent –

As the ultimate guarantor of our safety and our security.

The moment has arrived –

To transform how we defend ourselves...

And to renew our nation –

An investment in British pride and the British people...

A defence dividend –

That will be felt in the pockets of working people...

And the prosperity of the country...

Securing growth for generations to come...

Part of a new contract to unite the Kingdom...

A new spirit of service, flowing from every part of society –

From the supply lines to the front lines –

Everyone benefitting, everyone playing their role –

Doing their duty to the nation and to each other –

To preserve our way of life –

And the things that we hold dear...

Because when it comes to security and renewal:

Nothing works unless we all work together.

Thank you very much indeed.

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